

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 have been rejected, claims 4-5 have been canceled, and claims 6-9 have been added. Thus, claims 1-3 and 6-9 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Nicholson in view of Japanese Patent Application No. JP 11-153180 to Noboru et al. ("Noboru"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for the reasons set forth below.

Claim 1 is directed to a vibration isolating bushing including a main shaft member 1 including a tubular portion 11, a flange portion 12, and a block portion 14; an outer cylinder member 2 disposed coaxially on an outer side of the main shaft member 1; and a rubber elastic body 3 disposed between the main shaft member 1 and the outer cylinder member 2. The rubber elastic body 3 includes a hollow portion 31, a non-deforming rubber portion 32, and a connecting portion 33 for connecting an inner peripheral surface of the outer cylinder member 2 to the non-deforming rubber portion 32. The non-deforming rubber portion 32 fills a gap between the flange portion 12 and an end face of the block portion 14 facing the flange portion 12 in the axial direction.

The hollow portion 31 extends up to a position substantially near an end surface of the outer cylinder member 2 to directly surround the block portion 14 on a radial outer peripheral surface and a side surface thereof. The radial outer peripheral surface of the block portion 14 extends circumferentially, and the side surface of the block portion extends from the radial outer peripheral surface to the main shaft member 1.

Nicholson discloses a tube 10 connected to an outer sleeve 11 by a resilient body 12 of rubber. The Examiner has included a marked-up version of Nicholson's Fig. 1 on page 4 of the Office Action and has indicated on the drawing the hollow portion, the connecting portion, the non-deforming portion, and the flange portion of Nicholson's device.

The Examiner contends that Nicholson discloses all of the elements of claims 1-3 except for the cross-section of the hollow portion as claimed. The Examiner contends that Noboru teaches this feature and that it would be obvious to modify the hollow portion of Nicholson's bushing in view of the shape of Noboru's hollow portion.

The Examiner contends that Noboru's bushing includes a shaft member 56 with a block portion 78, an outer cylinder member 19, and a rubber elastic body with a hollow portion 74 disposed between the shaft member 56 and the outer cylinder member 19. The Examiner has construed Noboru's end face (see attached drawing) as the side surface of the claimed invention since this surface "extends from the radial outer peripheral surface to the main shaft member."

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's position. The hollow portion 74 disclosed in Noboru is disposed between the flange portion 30 of the main shaft member 12 and the end face of the block portion 78 on the side of the flange portion 30. In other words, the hollow portion 74 of Noboru is formed at a position corresponding to a position where the non-deforming rubber portion is disposed in the claimed structure. Unlike the claimed structure, the hollow portion 74 of Noboru does not axially extend to be open in the end face away from the flange portion of the main shaft member. Further, the end surface of the block portion which is surrounded by the hollow portion 74 in Noboru is not the end face of the block portion away from the flange portion. Although the hollow portion in Noboru can be seen to directly surround the end face of the block portion from Fig. 2 or Fig. 4 in Noboru, the manner of providing the hollow portion (the structure feature of the hollow portion in the whole structure of the bush) is completely different from the hollow portion of the claimed structure.

Further, the claimed invention would not be obtained if one were to modify Nicholson's bushing in view of Noboru's hollow portion. The claimed invention sets forth a non-deforming rubber portion that "fills a gap between the flange portion and an end face of the block portion facing the flange portion," as set forth in claim 1. However, Noboru's hollow portion surrounds the end face of the block portion which faces the flange portion, and therefore, Noboru cannot be

combined with Nicholson to provide both (1) a non-deforming rubber portion that fills the gap between the end face and the flange and (2) a hollow portion surrounding this end face.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-3 are patentable over the applied references.

Applicant has added new dependent claims that include additional features of the invention that are not disclosed by Noboru or Nicholson, e.g., the side surface extends in the axial direction, the hollow portion surrounds a second side surface of the block portion, the second side surface extends in the axial direction, and the side surface and second side surface are substantially parallel. Thus, claims 6-9 are patentable over the applied prior art.

In view of the above, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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